

# William Alexander at 20 Goes Home to Decide About Future

GREENSBORO, N.C., Feb. 15.—The late William Alexander Jenkins, who was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1848 to 1852, died at his home in Greensboro, N.C., on Feb. 14, 1961. He was 88 years old. He was born in Greensboro, N.C., on Feb. 15, 1873. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1848 to 1852. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1848 to 1852.

By CONGRESSMAN

KEN HECHLER

The great importance of a good education was never better illustrated than in the life and career of Albert Gallatin Jenkins. Education sharpened his mental tools, deepened his moral sensitivity, and broadened his perspective. He learned the value of challenging competition and his fellow students provided plenty of that. Above all, he developed moral and intellectual courage of the highest order.

There was one quality which Albert did not have to learn or acquire at school: the pursuit of excellence. This attribute he had already absorbed from his father and mother and it was woven as a constant thread throughout his every action.

At the age of 17, young Jenkins had already completed his studies at Marshall Academy (now Marshall University) and

had gone on to obtain his A. B. degree after making a brilliant academic record at Jefferson College. Albert's two older brothers, who roomed with him at Jefferson College and graduated with him in 1842, decided to pursue differing paths of interest after 1842. Thomas Jefferson Jenkins, the oldest brother, returned to the Greenbottom plantation to supervise the vast farming operations of the sprawling 4,441-acre tract along the Ohio River. By the time the Jenkins brothers had graduated from college, their father Captain William Jenkins had reached the proverbial age of "three score years and ten" and he needed both help and the assurance that his life's work would not go for naught.

The second oldest brother, William Alexander Jenkins, decided after graduation from Jefferson College that he wanted to become a doctor. So in the fall of 1842 William went to Philadelphia to enroll in the Jefferson Medical College, a branch of Jefferson College. William then left the Greenbottom plantation and the

big red brick house now on the Gustin property on Lunsford Lane and migrated to St. Louis, Mo., where he practiced medicine, married and settled down for most of the rest of his life.

## Reaches Fork In Road

Albert Gallatin's sister Eustasia, a brilliant and highly talented young woman who studied at Oberlin College and the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, married Pembroke Waugh of Amherst County, Va.

In 1842, Albert Gallatin Jenkins had reached a fork in the road. He contemplated what his brothers and sister had done, and then firmly decided to strike forward on a bold, new course leading to a degree in law. He chose the best law school in the country, at Cambridge, Mass., and elected to attend the Harvard Law School.

Not yet 18 years of age, young Jenkins enrolled at Harvard Law on September 28, 1842, after spending a pleasant summer at Greenbottom. In the evening of his life, his vigorous father tried to persuade Albert to tarry a little longer and enjoy the comforts of home life in Cabell County along the Ohio River. But Albert had in his veins some of the same restless urge for accomplishment which his father possessed, and he was eager to escape the gentle, restful life which he might have chosen without too much effort.

He wanted to prove that he, Albert Gallatin Jenkins, was an individual, that he could move mountains himself without the help of his illustrious father, and above all he felt the unconscious urge that his late mother had conveyed that he be of service to humanity.

A few weeks ago I talked with Dean Erwin N. Griswold of Harvard Law School concerning the course of study which Harvard offered in 1842,

and any other information in the Harvard archives concerning Albert Gallatin Jenkins's record at the Law School. Dean Griswold reported back to me that a thorough search of the records revealed that no marks were kept until 1870. We do know that young Jenkins first lived at a boarding house called "Mr. W. Torrey's" and during his senior year at Harvard he lived at No. 15 Graduate's Hall.

## 4 Professors In School

There were only four professors in the law school at the time; Joel Parker, Theophilus Parsons, Franklin Dexter, and Luther S. Cushing. "The design of this Institution," solemnly states the 1842 catalog, "is to afford a complete course of legal education for gentlemen intended for the Bar in any of the United States, except in matters of mere local law and practice; and also a systematic course of studies in Commercial Jurisprudence for those who intend to devote themselves exclusively to mercantile pursuits. The course of instruction for the Bar embraces the various branches of the Common Law; and of Equity, Admiralty, Commercial, International and Constitutional Law; and the Jurisprudence of the United States. Lectures are given also upon the history, sources and general principles of the Civil Law and upon the theory and practice of Parliamentary Law . . .

Two moot courts are holden in each week, at each of which a case, previously given out, is argued by four students, and an opinion delivered by the presiding Professor. And meetings of all the students are regularly holden, at which questions and subjects of a legal character are discussed, and the debates are conducted agreeably to the rules and practice of legislative bodies."

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There is little doubt that the practical training which Jenkins obtained at Harvard Law in the moot courts, the application of parliamentary law, and the study of legislation awakened the kind of interest which later inspired him to run for Congress. Certainly the training which he received served him well both in the House of Representatives and in the Confederate Congress during the War Between the States.

The course of studies at Harvard Law School at that time were so arranged as to be completed in two academic years, and on July 17, 1886, Albert Gallatin Jenkins was awarded his Law B. degree.

Then once again he faced an important decision as to his future. Still not yet 26 years of age, where should he turn? He returned to his native and beloved Cabell County to the Greenbottom Homestead to make his decision.

(To Be Continued)